United Nations A/ES-10/269–S/2004/409

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
19 May 2004

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Fifty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 19 May 2004 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

While the Palestinian people continue to await action by the international community, including by the Security Council, to stem the mounting toll of death and destruction being caused by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the occupying forces today continued their terror and killing spree in the Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, slaughtering several more Palestinian civilians, including several children.

In the afternoon hours of today (Palestine time), the Israeli occupying forces, using helicopter gunships, tank shelling and machine gunfire, opened fire on the large crowd of more than 3,000 Palestinian civilians who were marching from Rafah towards the Tel El-Sultan neighbourhood in protest against the invasion and destruction of the camp and their homes and the killing of dozens of Palestinians in recent days. These people were unarmed civilian demonstrators, many of them schoolchildren and women. As the situation on the ground in the Rafah area remains chaotic, it has been difficult to determine the exact number of casualties caused by the brutal and vicious Israeli attack. However, as of now, it is being reported that at least 10 Palestinian civilians were killed in the assault, most of them children, and that more than 60 other civilians have been wounded by the shelling and shrapnel, dozens of them critically. In addition, nine other Palestinians were also killed by the occupying forces today.

The hospital in Rafah has been unable to keep up with the number of casualties and a medical emergency has been declared in the Gaza Strip as doctors and rescue personnel attempt to secure enough supplies, blood and transportation to care for all those wounded as a result of the occupying Power's excessive and indiscriminate use of force. In addition, it has been reported that the Israeli occupying forces obstructed the passage of several ambulances trying to take some of the critically wounded from Rafah to Khan Yunis today, delaying the ambulances at checkpoints and then only allowing them to pass on dirt roads and not the main

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thoroughfare. Compounding the humanitarian crisis and desperation in Rafah has been the fact that residents were cut off from electricity and water services for many hours since yesterday and a curfew has been imposed on the entire camp.

Without any doubt, the actions today of Israel, the occupying Power, constitute war crimes. The wilful killing and injury of civilians constitute grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Today's actions by the occupying Power must be added to the long series of crimes committed by it against the Palestinian people. Such crimes were not just committed today or yesterday, for it is a fact that Israel has been incessantly committing all forms of war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations against the Palestinian people for days, weeks, months, years and decades since it began its occupation in 1967. The perpetrators of all those crimes must be held accountable.

In the light of these serious developments and the continuing deterioration of the situation on the ground, we reiterate our appeal to the international community, including the Security Council, urgently to take action to address the growing crisis. Measures must be taken to bring a halt to the ongoing Israeli onslaught against the Palestinian people, to compel Israel to adhere to international law, including international humanitarian law, and to provide for the protection of the defenceless civilian population under Israel's occupation. Only serious efforts by the International community can stop the bloodshed and destruction and the further destabilization of this dangerous situation.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 191 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 18 May 2004 (A/ES-10/268-S/2004/402), constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of those war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Accordingly, in follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, it is my deepest regret to inform you that, since my letter to you yesterday, at least 19 more Palestinians, including many children, have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, raising the total number of martyrs killed since September 2000 to 3,023 Palestinians. (The names of the martyrs that have been identified are contained in the annex to the present letter.)

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nasser **Al-Kidwa**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Annex to the identical letters dated 19 May 2004 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Names of martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (Wednesday, 19 May 2004)

Wednesday, 19 May 2004

1. Ibrahim Jihad Al-Qan (18 years old)
2. Tayseer Zaki Klob
3. Mohammed Hussein Turkman
4. Issam Nazem Arafat
5. Khalil Abu Sa'deh
6. Mohammed Abdallah Abu Nasser (16 years old)
7. Saber Abu Libdeh (13 years old)
8. Osama Abu Nasser
9. Shadi Fayez Al-Mughazi
10. Said Naji Abu Qamar
11. Ala'a Muslim Shikh Al-Eid
12. Mohamed Talal Abu Shaa'r (18 years old)
13. Fuad Ammar Al-Saqa (13 years old)
14. Ashraf Abu Mar'aei
15. Mubarak Saleem Al-Hashash (11 years old)
16. Ahmed Jamal Abu Saeed (13 years old)
17. Mohammed Tarek Mansour (12 years old)
18. Rajab Nimer Barhoum (15 years old)
19. Ayman Aballah Abu Jalhoub (18 years old, sustained wounds from 1 May 2004)

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* The total number of Palestinian martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces since 28 September 2000 is 3,023.